DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 207 027 CS 006 277

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TITLE Choosing a Text for the College Methods Course in Reading.
PUB DATE 81
NOTE 15p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the International Reading Association (26th, New Orleans, LA, April 27-May 1, 1981).

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Evaluation Methods; Higher Education; Instructional Materials; *Methods Courses; Rating Scales; Reading Instruction; *Teacher Education; *Textbook Evaluation; *Textbook Selection

ABSTRACT

Intended for teacher educators in reading, this paper provides criteria for evaluating texts for reading methods courses. The first part of the paper discusses some considerations in choosing a text, including course format, how frequently the text will be used, and whether the text will be a supplemental, companion, or principal resource. The remainder of the paper consists of a rating scale for reading methods texts that allows systematic evaluation of the book's content, readability, authorship, physical characteristics, organizational aids, reference aids, and instructor's manual. (HTH)

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ED207027

Choosing a Text for the College Methods Course in Reading

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Paper presented at Preconvention Institute 16, International Reading Association Convention, New Orleans, 1981.

Running Head: Methods Text Selection

CS006277

Choosing a Text for the College Methods Course in Reading

Selecting and using professional textbooks in Reading Methods courses take on an added dimension of responsibility when we consider our role as instructors in the overall teacher preparation program. In addition to demonstrating and modeling the various techniques and approaches of reading instruction and/or assessment that we deem appropriate, we must be cautious to also use texts which in turn "model" the best of textual features(e.g., content-matter, readability, organizational aids, physical characteristics) which clearly organize and present the selected information for meeting our course aims and objectives. So our task is no small one! While some allowances might have to be made along the way, we should feel challenged each semester with the responsibility of selecting and using the most appropriate text we can identify for our Reading Methods courses: one which our students will recognize and accept as a significant aid to their understanding of our course instruction. The following guidelines represent a synthesis of existing text-evaluation literature; but these criteria have been adjusted to focus more directly on the goals and objectives of Reading Methods instruction.

Some Entry Level Considerations

Here are some basic decisions we must make about the role we expect the selected text to play in our course curriculum for helping our teacher candidates internalize and retain the Reading concepts and principles we advocate.

1. For the purpose of this text evaluation, I am searching for a

   __ required "principal" Reading methods text.
   __ required "companion" Reading methods/activity text.
   __ required "reserve-copy" Reading methods/activity text.
   __ recommended "supplemental" Reading methods text.
   __ recommended "supplemental" Reading activity text.
   __ Other_____
   (please specify)

2. The selected Reading Methods text will used in the following undergraduate Reading course:

   __ Elementary School Reading Methods
   __ Elementary School Reading Methods - Practicum
   __ Diagnostic/Prescriptive Reading Methods - Practicum
   __ Reading Methods for the Culturally Different Learner
   __ Reading Methods for the Content Areas
   __ Other_____
   (please specify)

3. In this Reading Methods course, the selected text will be used as part of a

   __ "single"-text approach.
   __ "multiple"-text approach.

4. In this Reading Methods course, the selected text will be "required" reading for my class-sessions

   __ extensively.
   __ regularly.
   __ often.
   __ occasionally.
   __ minimally.

5. In this Reading Methods course, I will demonstrate and model the principles, concepts, approaches and techniques described in the selected text

   __ extensively.
   __ regularly.
   __ often.
   __ occasionally.
   __ minimally.

6. The selected text will be used

   __ only in my sections of this particular Reading course.
   __ in other instructors' sections of this course as well.

7. I will provide my Reading Methods students the opportunity to evaluate the quality and usefulness of the selected text:

__ Yes
__ No

Text Evaluation Criteria

The criteria presented below has been designed for selecting texts for use in Reading Methods courses. The Evaluation is flexible enough for you to include other criteria you feel will be necessary to meet your local conditions and Methods students' needs. So, as you work through the criteria, be sure to insert your own criteria in the appropriate "Additional Criteria" subunit of each section in the Evaluation scale. If you find that some of the criteria are not applicable to your evaluation of a particular text, simply ignore those parts of the Evaluation. Otherwise, mark an "X" in the appropriate column of the scale to indicate your assessment for each criterion.

READING METHODS TEXT EVALUATION SCALE

(Rating: 4=Excellent 3=Very Good 2=Good 1=Fair 0=Poor)

		4	3	2	1	0
I.	SUBJECT MATTER CONTENT					
A.	Fulfills "most" objectives of my Reading Methods course as I designed them	O	O	O	O	O
B.	Contains current Reading material and includes coverage of new interpretations of old materials	O	O	O	O	O

C. Presents current descriptions about Reading methods accurately

D. Presents historical facts about methods and procedures appropriately and accurately

E. Presents a comfortable flow of ideas in a clear and concise manner

F. Provides sufficient coverage of Reading concepts and techniques

G. Includes current and proper Reading terminology

H. Defines Reading terms accurately with vivid, concrete referents

I. Pertains to student interests in teaching

J. Offers insights and practical suggestions to students for incorporating Reading concepts and methods in classroom instruction

K. Presents Reading concepts and procedures which are not available in other texts

L. Offers new dimension or direction to the subject of the Reading material

M. Encourages Methods students to "think out" solutions to Reading-related issues and problems

"Additional Criteria"

N.

O.

P.

--Section Rating ☐☐☐☐☐

II. READABILITY

A. Most of the Reading methods material estimated at appropriate college reading level(Use Readability Formula samples to determine this,e.g., Fog Index, Raygor Estimator)

B. A minimum of difficult, abstract vocabulary used which are apart from the key concepts developed

C. New Reading concepts presented in straightforward sentence construction

D. New Reading principles/methods separated judiciously by examples

E. Unfamiliar Reading concepts paced evenly throughout the text to avoid overload of concept density

F. Reading material written in casual and conversational style; where appropriate, generous personal references used

G. Antecedents and referents are clear--particularly across sentences

"Additional Criteria"

H.

I.

--Section Rating

III. AUTHORSHIP

A. Is/are competent and qualified in this field of Reading Methods

B. Has/have a reputation as significant producer/s of information in this field

C. Has/have produced previous materials which I have found valuable in this field of Reading Methods

E. Viewpoints and opinions closely match my own in terms of the way in which I designed this Reading course

F. Viewpoints and opinions are held in high esteem by other authorities in this field of Reading Methods

"Additional Criteria"

G. O O O O O

H. O O O O O

--Section Rating ☐☐☐☐☐

IV. PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS

A. Binding is strong enough to withstand heavy reference use O O O O O

B. Binding allows cover and pages to open flat O O O O O

C. Margins are wide enough for making marginal notes O O O O O

D. Line length is short enough to facilitate readers' concentration O O O O O

E. Spacing between lines is adequate to facilitate eye movement from one line to the next O O O O O

F. Print size is large enough to be read easliy O O O O O

G. Paper is durable and glare proof O O O O O

H. Contrast between print color and page color is pleasing O O O O O

I. Illustrations are located logically and pleasingly on the page near the appropriate text content O O O O O

J. Illustrations are appropriately titled O O O O O

K. Graphic aids are numbered consecutively and suitably titled O O O O O

"Additional Criteria"

L. O O O O O

M. O O O O O

--Section Rating ☐☐☐☐☐

V. ORGANIZATIONAL AIDS

A.	Chapter introductions relate previous chapter methods to present chapter material	O O O O O
B.	Overall purpose of chapter clearly explained in introduction	O O O O O
C.	Major topics(headings) clearly identified in introduction	O O O O O
D.	Major topics clearly relate to overall purpose stated for the chapter	O O O O O
E.	Outline of chapter headings presented at beginning of the chapter	O O O O O
F.	Major and minor headings indented logically and consistently	O O O O O
G.	Size of bold-faced print or color differentiate major headings from minor ones	O O O O O
H.	Introductory paragraphs follow each major heading to explain purpose of the heading	O O O O O
I.	Main Ideas of Reading methods consistently located in consistent paragraph position (e.g., first sentence)	O O O O O
J.	Signal words(e.g., first, also, however, finally) located at beginning of paragraph to guide Methods students' train of thought	O O O O O
K.	Marginal notes presented to clarify or reinforce ideas about Reading methods from the text	O O O O O
L.	Graphic aids used which are vital to understanding of the Reading concepts	O O O O O
M.	Summary paragraph presented at close of each major heading	O O O O O
N.	Chapter summary included which conceptually organizes topics of Reading methods covered in seqential order	O O O O O
O.	Study questions coincide with Reading content I expect my students to know	O O O O O

P. Application activities/exercises provided for students to produce and/or try out the Reading methods presented

Q. References cited in the chapter are listed at the end of the chapter

R. Additional references which elaborate on Reading information given at end of chapter

"Additional Criteria"

S.

T.

--Section Rating

VI. REFERENCE AIDS

A. Table of Contents:

1. Organizes chapters by units or topics of Reading methods

2. Presents Reading topics in apparent logical sequence

3. Contains major headings/topics for each chapter (in outline format)

4. Clearly labels pages titles and pages of appendices

5. Clearly lists pages of glossary

6. Includes separate listings of graphic aids, i.e., tables, maps, graphs, diagrams, illustrations

B. Preface:

1. Clearly identifies the audience for this type or treatment of Reading methods

2. Presents clearly-stated viewpoints of the author/s with rationale

3. Indicates overall purpose of the text

4. Includes suggestions to Methods students for reading the text most effectively

C. Appendices are sufficient and appropriately presented to illustrate or elaborate Reading concepts developed in the chapters

D. Glossary is presented which clearly and concretely defines technical terminology

E. References or bibliography presented which lists all Reading-related literature cited in the chapters

F. Index adequately covers main topics of Reading methods in Author and Subject sections

G. Index is arranged into subtopics to provide quick reference

"Additional Criteria"

H.

I.

--Section Rating

VII. INSTRUCTOR'S MANUAL

A. Provides background explanation and rationale for stated broad goal of the Reading Methods text

B. States specific Reading-related instructional objectives for each lesson

C. Provides list of all materials needed for each lesson and how each will be used

D. Suggests teaching procedures for each lesson

E. Contains and describes concrete learning activities for in-class reinforcement of Reading methods presented

F. Suggests grouping procedures for in-class activities

G. Suggests individualized teaching procedures

H. Suggests and includes evaluation instruments for assessing Methods students' acquisition of Reading principles and practices

I. Provides answers to all questions, problems, and exercises

J. Provides suggested study guides to direct Methods students' acquisition of key Reading concepts and procedures

K. Suggests enrichment and /or remedial activities and exercises for students of varying abilities, backgrounds, and teaching interests

"Additional Criteria"

L.

M.

--Section Rating

VIII. GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS

A. Reading methods described are as up-to-date as publication date indicates

B. If revised edition, text reflects significant improvements over previous editions

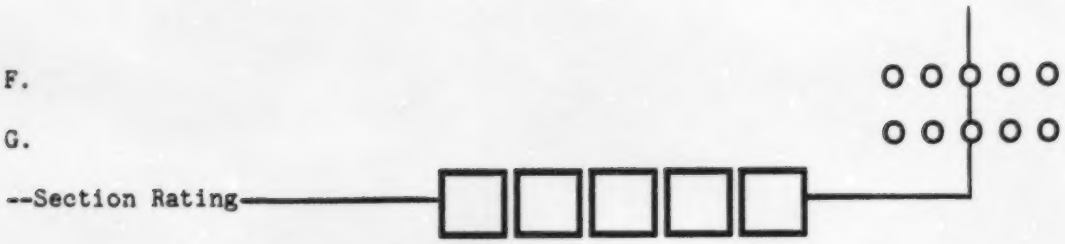
C. Attractive appearance enriched with current illustrations (photographs represent appropriately our pluralistic society)

D. Writing style is clear and concise, employing correct grammatical structure

E. Cost of this Reading Methods text comparable with prices of texts for other university-related courses

"Additional Criteria"

11



SUMMARY OF METHODS TEXT EVALUATION

_____

Title of Reading Methods Text Evaluated

DIRECTIONS:
Insert an "X" for each of your Section Ratings in the appropriate row and column of the Summary Scale below.

		4	3	2	1	0
I.	Subject Matter Content					
II.	Readability					
III.	Authorship					
IV.	Physical Characteristics					
V.	Organizational Aids					
VI.	Reference Aids					
VII.	Instructor's Manual					
VIII.	General Characteristics					

C O M M E N T S

Strengths

Weaknesses

O V E R A L L E V A L U A T I O N

__ Excellent __ Very Good __ Good __ Fair __ Poor

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